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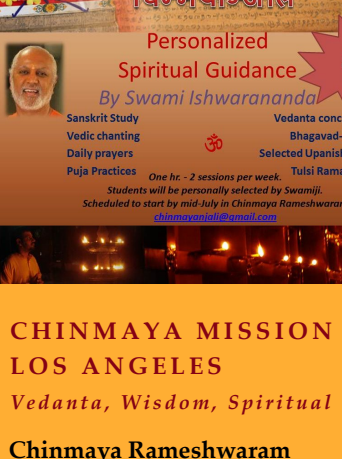
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**CHINMAYA MISSION
LOS ANGELES**

Vedanta, Wisdom, Spiritual Growth

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USA

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Over Thirty Years Of Service To Humanity



Upcoming Events

Sadhana Day with Swami Ishwarananda	May 3	8:15 am - 10:30 am
Topic: Deathless Spirit		
Valmiki Ramayan Discourse Series	May 5 - May 9	7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
with Swami Ishwarananda		
Mother's Day Celebration & Puja Gurudev Jayanti	May 11	
BV Session 1		
Video Talk by Puja Gurudev for adults		9:00 am - 10:00 am
Regular BV classes for children		9:00 am - 10:00 am
Maatru Puja by BV children & Aarti		10:00 am - 10:30 am
Lunch cooked by fathers		10:30 am
BV Session 2		
Video Talk by Puja Gurudev for adults		12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Regular BV classes for children		12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Maatru Puja by BV children & Aarti		1:00 pm - 1:30 pm
Lunch cooked by fathers		1:30 pm

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Thus Spake The Master

If you want to take up sincere Sadhana, you will have to redirect your life's flow. Hence the first thing to be renounced is the "blind following" of the patterns of time. Stop living blindly a stamped-blueprint of life.

- Swami Chinmayananda

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THINK!

Body as only a vehicle of the soul

Action is only for body as a rule

Knowledge as not any particular action

By wisdom, discarding 'I am the body' notion

With action-less body and notion-less mind

Approaching the Lord, who is infinitely kind

Love as the only language to speak

Freedom by meditation is all that I seek

- Swami Ishwarananda

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Joyous and Fun Filled Regional NY Festivities at Rameshwaram

The annual Regional New Year celebrations at Chinmaya Rameshwaram took on added gaiety this year debuting in a grander avatar with more diverse participation as the India Regional New Year Fest. The occasion was celebrated as an opportunity to recognize that the New Year of most states in India falls around the March - April time frame and is a time of joyful community celebration at CMLA.

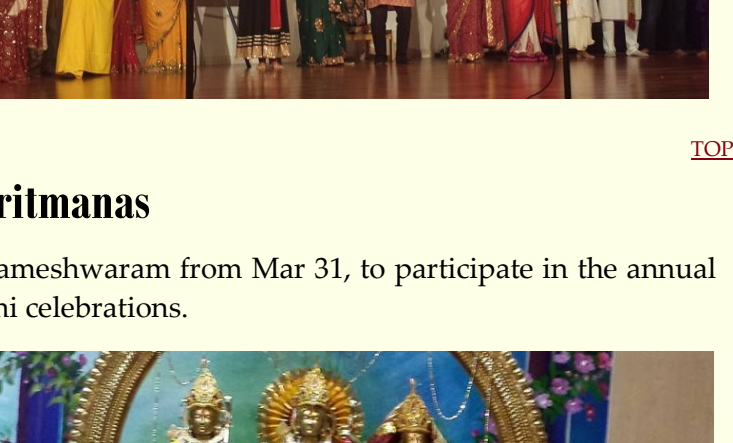
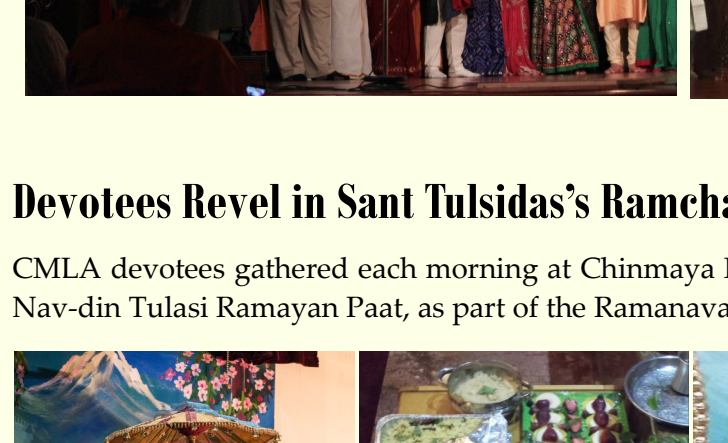


This year the states of Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat joined the festivities in addition to veteran participants Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. The evening's colorful program commenced with customary Devi Puja and the chanting of the Lalitha Sahasranamam. As the hall filled to capacity, vividly decorated table displays along the walls of the auditorium evoking the various state cultures of India, drew the delighted attention of the assembled audience.

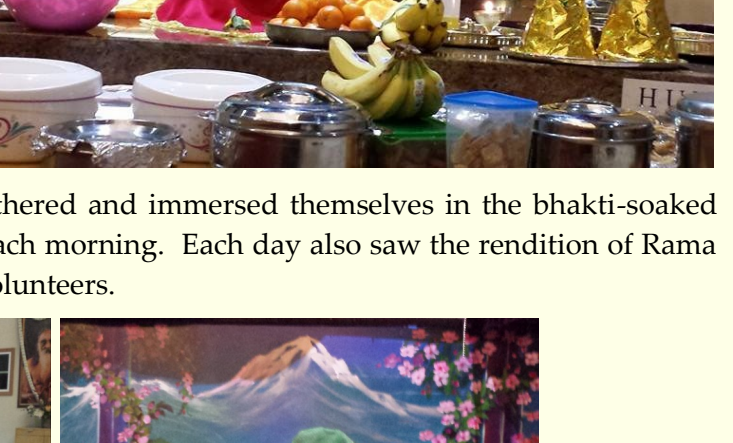
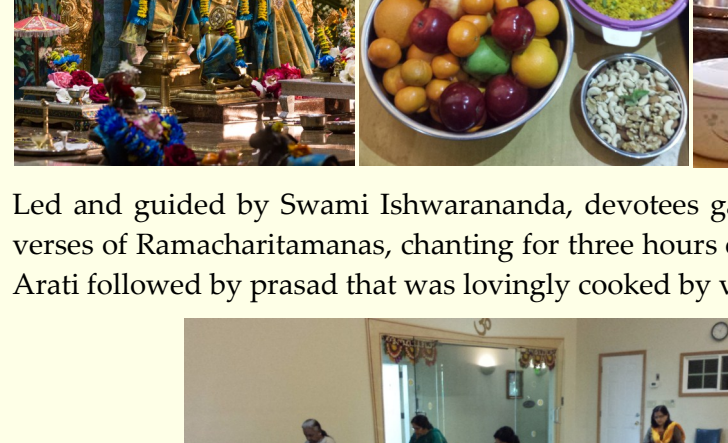


After recognizing the puja volunteers individually for their devotional service, Swami Ishwarananda who was the inspiration behind the event, emphasized the underlying unity under the apparent differences of region, language and foods that is India. Acharya Mahadevi echoed these sentiments as well. A short and meaningful birthday celebration for both Swamiji and Acharya Mahadevi was dedicated through short speeches by senior CMLA members consisting of Dr.Srinivasa Iyer and Dr.Vijaya Cherukuri, with Dr.Shashi Acharya garlanding both Acharyas.

This was followed by a well received comedic two hour multi cultural skit by CMLA's balavihar parents theater group "Natakajali" which was scripted and directed by Hema Ravikumar. It incorporated melodious songs, lively dances and memorable acting performances by enthusiastic amateur thespians.



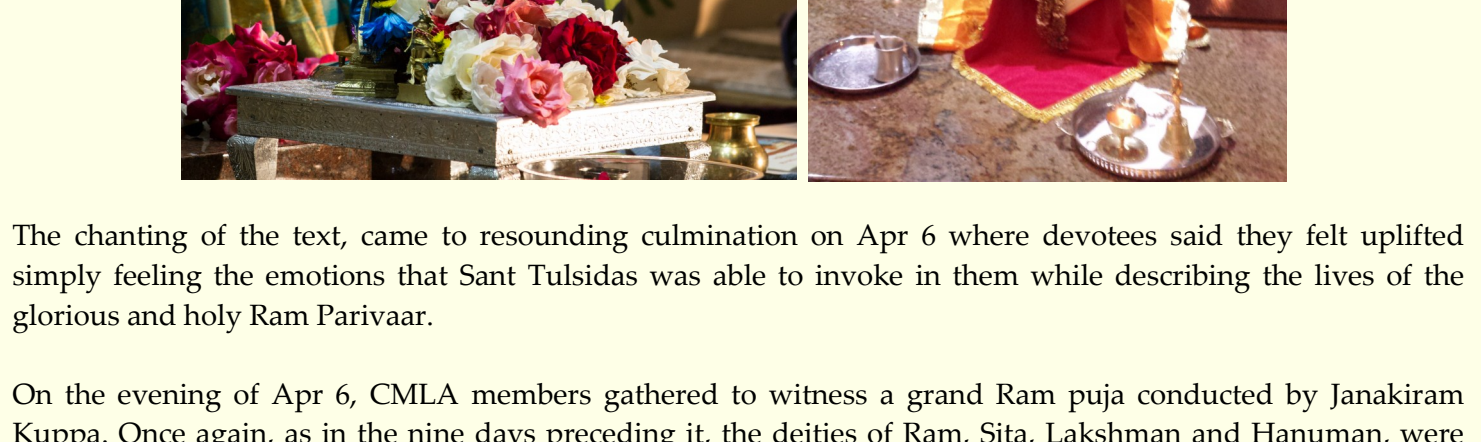
The night was complete with a lip smacking feast where all regions were represented in full force. As always the infrastructural and logistical support of CMLAs reliable sevaks for all aspects of the program from start to finish ensured a smooth and enjoyable evening for all.



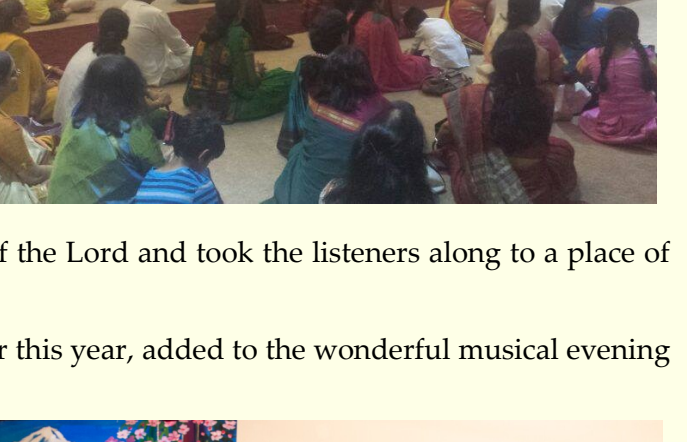
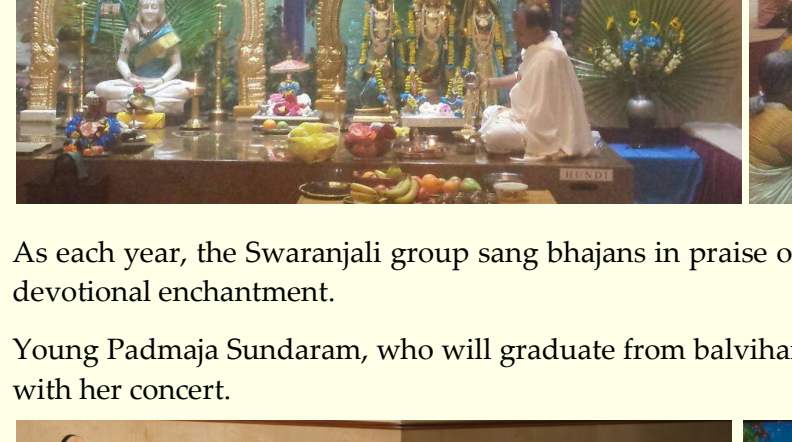
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Devotees Revel in Sant Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas

CMLA devotees gathered each morning at Chinmaya Rameshwaram from Mar 31, to participate in the annual Nav-din Tulasi Ramayan Paat, as part of the Ramanavami celebrations.

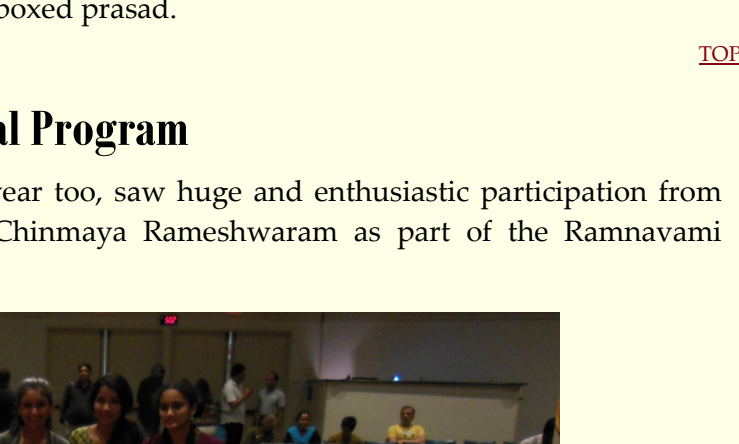
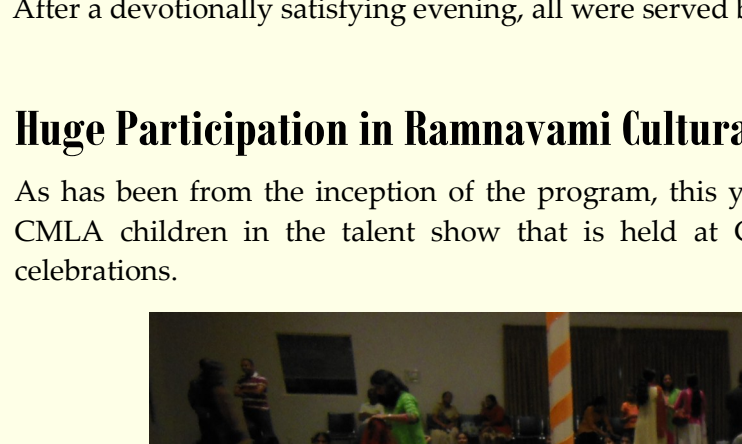


Led and guided by Swami Ishwarananda, devotees gathered and immersed themselves in the bhakti-soaked verses of Ramcharitmanas, chanting for three hours each morning. Each day also saw the rendition of Rama Arati followed by prasad that was lovingly cooked by volunteers.



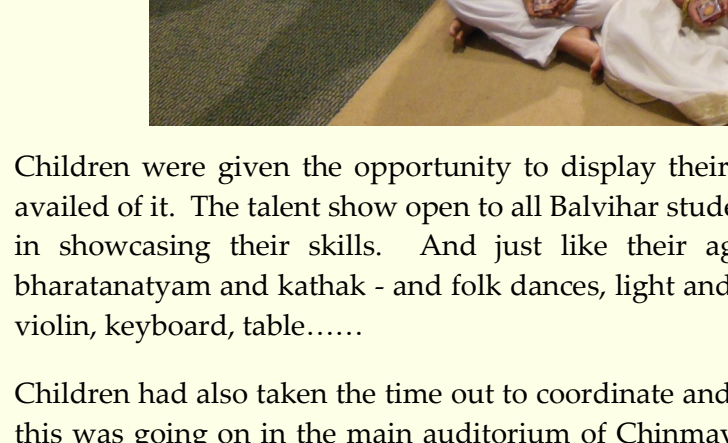
The chanting of the text, came to resounding culmination on Apr 6 where devotees said they felt uplifted simply feeling the emotions that Sant Tulsidas was able to invoke in them while describing the lives of the glorious and holy Ram Parivar.

On the evening of Apr 6, CMLA members gathered to witness a grand Ram puja conducted by Janakiram Kuppa. Once again, as in the nine days preceding it, the deities of Ram, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman, were beautifully adorned in grand clothes and jewelry by devotees, beckoning all with their appeal.



As each year, the Swaranjali group sang bhajans in praise of the Lord and took the listeners along to a place of devotional enchantment.

Young Padmaja Sundaram, who will graduate from balvihar this year, added to the wonderful musical evening with her concert.

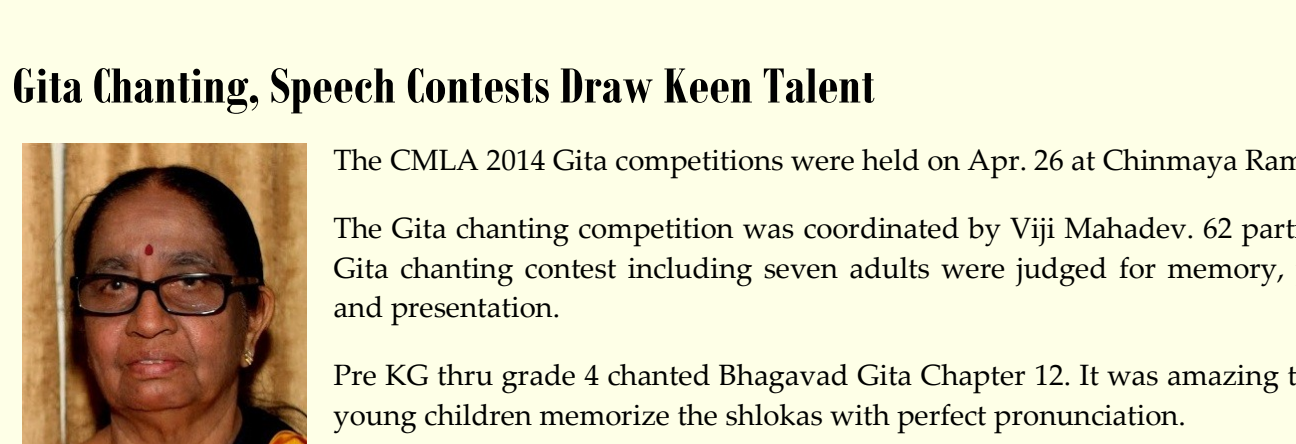


After a devotionally satisfying evening, all were served boxed prasad.

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Huge Participation in Ramnavami Cultural Program

As has been from the inception of the program, this year too, saw huge and enthusiastic participation from CMLA children in the talent show that is held at Chinmaya Rameshwaram as part of the Ramnavami celebrations.

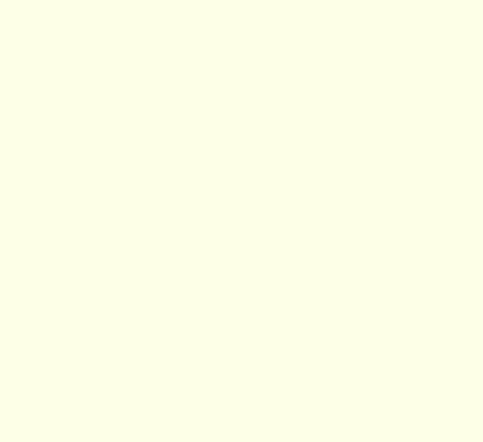
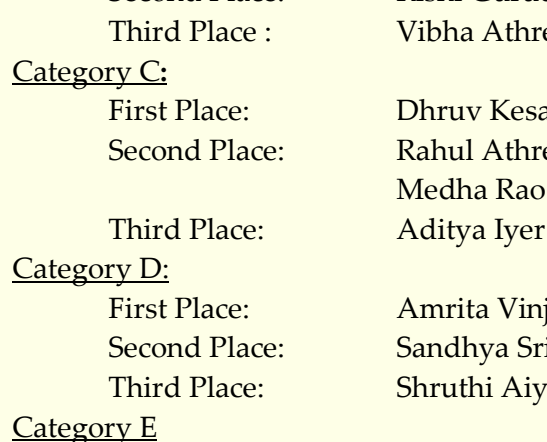


Children were given the opportunity to display their considerable talents on stage and over 85 young ones availed of it. The talent show open to all Balvihar students saw kindergartners to Yuva Kendra children engage in showcasing their skills. And just like their ages, the talent was diverse. There were classical - bhartanatyam and kathak - and folk dances, light and classical Hindustani and Carnatic music, recitals on the violin, keyboard, table.....

Children had also taken the time out to coordinate and practice the staging of skits on the Ramayana. While all this was going on in the main auditorium of Chinmaya Rameshwaram, children also took part in the art and essay competitions, where they were given topics on the spot on which the delineated in verse and color.

In short, the four hour long program saw budding artistes, painter, writers, give their best and which was enjoyed by all.

Swami Ishwarananda who was present through the event, was seen encouraging and applauding the young ones who inevitably rushed to him at the conclusion of their piece, for a photo op with him!



The evening wound down with closing prayers, followed by dinner.

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Gita Chanting, Speech Contests Draw Keen Talent

The CMLA 2014 Gita competitions were held on Apr. 26 at Chinmaya Rameshwaram . The Gita chanting competition was coordinated by Viji Mahadev. 62 participants in the Gita chanting contest including seven adults were judged for memory, pronunciation and presentation.

Pre KG thru grade 4 chanted Bhagavad Gita Chapter 12. It was amazing to see so many young children memorize the shlokas with perfect pronunciation.

Grades 5 thru 12 and adults chanted Bhagavad Gita chapter 13. Even though the number participants were small those who participated did an excellent job.

The Gita speech competition saw six children participate. It was started three years ago so that the older children would take time to learn and appreciate the meaning of the shlokas. Contestants were given three topics from Chapter 13 of the Gita to pick from. Each spoke on one of the chosen topic for 2-3 minutes. They were judged on relevance, understanding of the topic and clarity of presentation.

The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners will be receiving custom trophies with their names and medals will be awarded to winners of the 'Special Recognition' category. All participants will receive certificates.

The main reason for conducting these competitions is to motivate both children and adults to learn the Bhagavad Gita so that everyone understands the message of Lord Krishna to Arjuna. Puja Gururji, Swami Tejomayananda explains the grand vision behind this as "Chant - Study - Know- Live. Chanting introduces one, to such a noble text. This kindles the curiosity to know more about the meaning and the contents. This in turn, leads to study. The knowledge gained thereby is translated into actions and thus becomes a way of life."

Bhagavad Gita Chanting Competition 2014 Winners

Category A:
First Place: Siona Pramoda (Rameshwaram I)
Second Place: Mohana Sai (San Gabriel)
Third Place: Nikhil Sarvaiya (Agoura Hills)

Category B:
First Place: Pranavi Oduru (Rameshwaram i)
Second Place: Rishi Gurudev (Agoura Hills)
Third Place: Vibha Athreya (Redlands)

Category C:
First Place: Dhruv Kesavarap (Agoura Hills)
Second Place: Rahul Athreya (Redlands)
Third Place: Medha Rao (Rameshwaram I)
Aditya Iyer (Agoura Hills)

Category D:
First Place: Amrita Vinjamury
Second Place: Sandhya Sridhar (San Gabriel)
Third Place: Shruthi Aiyar (Rameshwaram I)

Category E:
First Place: Pranati Kuppa (Rameshwaram I)
Second Place: Purvaja Balaji (San Gabriel)
Third Place: Anusha Silla (San Gabriel)

Category (adults):
First Place: Padmaja Silla (San Gabriel)
Second Place: Shobha Aiyar (Rameshwaram I)
Third Place: Mahesh Rajarao (Rameshwaram I)

Special Recognition Awards

Category B:
Tripura Sai (San Gabriel); Neha Sambangi (South Bay); Nandini Iyer (Agoura Hills)

Category C:
Rishika Chedalawada (Rameshwaram I); Eshwar Kuppa (Rameshwaram I); Aneesh Komaragiri (San Gabriel); Sanjana Chandrasekar (Agoura Hills)

Category D:
Srikar Balasubramanian (San Gabriel); Medha Mageswaran (San Gabriel)

Bhagavad Gita Speech Competition 2014 Winners

Group I:
First Place: Hansika Sundaresan (Rameshwaram I)
Second Place: Sharan Raghavan (Rameshwaram I)
Third Place: Ashika Raghavan (Rameshwaram I)

Group II:
First Place: Nandan Vinjamury (Rameshwaram I)

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Kushal Das Excels at Kalanjali Concert

Musical lovers convened for another delectable Kalanjali concert at CMLAs Rameshwaram on Apr 27 to hear Kushal Das, the renowned All India Radio and Doordarshan artist.

He rewarded the audience fortunate enough to be present with an exemplary sitar performance. Das is considered to be the torchbearer of classical sitar for the next generation and he showed those in attendance, just why. He was accompanied by Acharya Abhijit Banerjee, a legendary tabla maestro who gave an equally exhilarating performance.

The recital commenced with a long alap in raag Patdweep, immediately showcasing the duo's talent. The notes easily coalesced into a remarkable melody, as the instruments' unique timbre reverberated throughout the auditorium.

The alap was followed by a composition in raag Poorya Kalyan, which was simultaneously devotional and euphoric in nature. The passionately powerful playing became increasingly dynamic, ending with a beautiful and entertaining dialog between the sitar and tabla.

A gat in raag MishraKamaj followed, evoking universal admiration and awe. The gat blossomed into a glittering garland of ragas - Dharbari Kanada, Miyan Di, Malhar, Desi, Jog, and Pilu. The concert radiated with spirit, leaving the audience mesmerized by the intense, emotive experience.

The concert drew to a close with a dhun in Mishra Pahadi; Das' expertise became apparent in his seemingly boundless repertoire of musical acumen. The pair's mutual respect and chemistry was obvious to the audience members, who were entranced by the enthralling performance for the entirety of the concert.

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SGBV Kids Enjoy Interfaith Interaction

Apr. 18 marked the fourth day of Passover for the Jewish community and Temple Beth David on the occasion, invited CMLA's San Gabriel balavihar and the Los Angeles Muslim Community represented by Imaam Sheboud.

Over 15 families from San Gabriel BV and Acharya Mahadevi attended the interfaith event. Soon the temple was finely interspersed with traditional Indian garb amidst the blue and purple skullcaps of the Jewish worshippers. Ahead of the program, Rabbi Alan Lachman engaged the BV children with stories and drew them into understanding what the Jewish faith was all about.

The festivities then began with the lighting of candles and a mix of English and Hebrew prayers led alternatively by the Rabbi and the Cantor, Richard Schwartz. The latter's singing very soon filled the hall with the most wonderful and joyful music. The Muezzin was then invited to recite the Muslim call for prayers, which was haunting and melodious. San Gabriel BV, accompanied by some of the Jewish children sang "Universal Peace, World Unity" and "Oh God, Beautiful".

Acharya Mahadevi talked about the meaning of the "Oh God Beautiful" poem indicating that the different faiths were different rivers flowing towards the same ocean - the love to all. Imaam Sheboud talked about the true spirit of religion and the need to put it in practice by extending love to all.

The service ended with the prayers offered to the Torah. Following this, the hosts invited everyone to partake of sweets and bread. The mood in the temple was joyous with everyone learning and enjoying the event thoroughly.

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Redlands BV Children Create Greater Understanding of Hinduism

"Rhythms of the East" was a program organized by the Edward Dean Museum in Cherry Valley on May 19. Kids from CMLA's Redlands balavihar performed puja and sang bhajans. They were indeed good ambassadors of Hinduism!

The children performed puja and sang bhajans, showcasing their devotion and understanding of Hinduism. They were indeed good ambassadors of Hinduism!

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Please send articles and pictures for publication to Nimmi Raghunathan at nimmicmla@gmail.com
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